

R 011021Z FEB 89  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2728  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
AMEMBASSY DOHA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT  
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL  
AMCONSUL ZURICH  
USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
CJTTFME

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 00636

FROM AMCONGEN DUBAI

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [ECON](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: TEHRAN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCENE

11. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

12. SUMMARY: WOMEN IN TEHRAN ARE TESTING THE LIMITS OF THE LIBERALIZATION OF DRESS CODES BY WEARING BRIGHTLY COLORED, FASHIONABLE CLOTHES, BARELY CONCEALED BY EQUALLY FASHIONABLE RAINCOATS OR SCARVES. BUSINESSMEN BEMOAN THE FAILURE OF THE ECONOMY TO REVIVE AFTER THE CEASEFIRE, THOUGH SOME PARTS OF THE ECONOMY ARE EXPERIENCING A REVIVAL. ANTI-ISRAELI PROPAGANDA OVERSHADOWS ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA ON THE STREETS OF TEHRAN. THE NATIONAL IRANIAN OIL COMPANY STRUGGLES TO OPERATE ON THE EXPERTISE OF A TINY MINORITY OF EXPERIENCED WORKERS.  
END SUMMARY.

13. TRAVELLERS FROM TEHRAN REPORT DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE CITY'S FASHION SCENE. THE MANAGER OF A MAJOR AIRLINE WHO RETURNED FROM A BUSINESS TRIP TO TEHRAN A FEW DAYS AGO REPORTS HAVING SEEN WOMEN WEARING BLUE JEANS, ALBEIT UNDER THEIR RAINCOATS. SOURCE ALSO SAW DOZENS OF WOMEN WEARING COLORFUL AND BRIGHTLY PRINTED SCARVES LOOSELY DRAWN OVER THEIR HEADS. DURING A RECENT VISIT TO DUBAI, THE COUSIN OF DUBAI'S IRANIAN FSN EXPRESSED AMAZEMENT THAT WOMEN HERE DO NOT HIGHLIGHT THEIR HAIR. APPARENTLY, A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN TEHRAN STREAK THEIR HAIR AND PROMINENTLY DISPLAY A BLOND FRINGE OUTSIDE THEIR SCARVES. THE DRAB RAINCOATS USUALLY WORN OVER CLOTHES HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY TRENDY EUROPEAN STYLES AND TWO-PIECE SUITS ARE APPEARING WITH GREATER FREQUENCY. (COMMENT: WHILE CONGEN DUBAI HAS BEEN HEARING REPORTS OF LIBERALIZING TRENDS IN DRESS CODES FOR SOME TIME NOW, THE AMAZEMENT OF BOTH IRANIAN AND WESTERN SOURCES WHO REPORTED THE ABOVE GIVES MUCH GREATER WEIGHT TO THE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED CHANGES.)

14. AIRLINE SOURCE REPORTS THAT MANY OF THE IRANIAN BUSINESSMEN HE DEALT WITH WERE GREATLY DISPIRITED OVER FAILURE OF THE ECONOMY TO PICK UP AFTER THE CEASEFIRE. ON HIS TRIP LAST WEEK, SOURCE NOTED AN INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF CONSUMER GOODS OF BETWEEN THIRTY AND FIFTY PERCENT SINCE HIS PREVIOUS TRIP TO TEHRAN ALMOST A YEAR AGO. AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID THAT ANYTHING COULD BE HAD IN TEHRAN'S BLACK MARKET, FOR A PRICE. WHILE THE REST OF THE ECONOMY IS FALTERING ONE SEGMENT OF THE ECONOMY IS EXPERIENCING A REVIVAL. APPARENTLY, THE WORLD'S OLDEST PROFESSION IS ONCE AGAIN PLAYING ITS TRADE IN THE LOBBIES OF TEHRAN'S PRINCIPAL HOTELS. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, HE WAS REPEATEDLY APPROACHED IN A DISCREET MANNER BY WOMEN IN HIS HOTEL.

THEY WOULD ASK FOR HIS NUMBER AND PROMISE TO CALL LATER TO SET UP AN ASSIGNATION. SUCH ASSIGNATIONS ARE SET UP IN PRIVATE RESIDENCES AND NEVER IN HOTELS WHERE THE DANGER OF BEING DISCOVERED IS TOO GREAT. PRICES ARE QUITE REASONABLE IF PAID IN HARD CURRENCIES.

15. MOST OF THE PEOPLE AIRLINE SOURCE MET WERE LOATHE TO DISCUSS POLITICS OPENLY, AND HE PERCEIVED A GREAT FEAR OF THE REVGUARDS AMONG HIS INTERLOCUTORS. HIS CONTACTS WERE ALSO VERY SUSPICIOUS OF EACH OTHER, FEARING THAT SOMETHING THEY SAID MIGHT BE REPORTED TO THE AUTHORITIES. ANTI-AMERICAN BANNERS WERE PRESENT IN ALL HOTEL LOBBIES BUT HAD BEEN RELEGATED TO OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACES. ON THE OTHER HAND, ANTI-ISRAELI POSTERS, BANNERS, AND BILLBOARDS WERE PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT TEHRAN. AT THE FIRST ROUNDABOUT ON THE ROAD FROM THE AIRPORT INTO TEHRAN, FOUR LARGE BILLBOARDS PROCLAIMED IN ENGLISH AND FARSI: ISRAEL

16. THE COUSIN OF DUBAI'S IRANIAN FSN WORKS IN NIOC HEADQUARTERS IN TEHRAN IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION. IN HER OPINION, THE NIOC IS RUN ON THE STRENGTH OF THE EXPERTISE OF A HANDFUL OF ITS 103,000 EMPLOYEES. UPPER MANAGEMENT IS COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON ITS SUBORDINATES FOR GUIDANCE IN DECISIONMAKING. WHENEVER THIS EMPLOYEE'S BOSS GOES INTO A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING, HE REMAINS IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH HER BY PHONE THROUGHOUT THE MEETING SEEKING HER GUIDANCE ON EVERYTHING FROM ROUTINE TO MANAGERIAL ISSUES. BECAUSE SOURCE IS A WOMAN, SHE CANNOT ATTEND THE MEETINGS HERSELF. THE INABILITY OF THE NIOC TO WORK EFFECTIVELY IS FURTHER HAMPERED BY DEFICIENCIES IN FOREIGN-LANGUAGE CAPABILITY AMONG ITS EMPLOYEES.

MACK